



CENTRAL COAST BASIN PLAN UPDATE

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING
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DATE: April 15, 2009
TO: San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Cheryl Journey, Chief Building Official
SUBJECT: Information Update to Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) Central Coast Basin Plan

On Friday, March 20, 2009, the RWQCB adopted the Implementation Program into the *Central Coast Regional Basin Plan*. This program spells out the necessary steps for the RWQCB and local regulatory agencies i.e. the County of San Luis Obispo, to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on implementation of the "Program". This MOU will include the Wastewater Management Plan which is required by Chapter 4, section VIII.D.1.b of the Central Coast Basin Plan adopted May 9, 2008, by RWQCB.

There have been questions raised about the March 20th meeting in Watsonville and how it will affect the *Central Coast Basin Plan*, and SLO County's onsite wastewater program. Most of the misunderstanding and ambiguity seems to be related to combining or integration of the requirements of the *Central Coast Basin Plan* with proposed statewide regulations under review in accordance with AB885 (AB885 requires the State Water Board to adopt statewide regulations for onsite wastewater systems). Agreement and adoption of statewide regulations is not anticipated to occur in the near future. If more stringent onsite wastewater statewide regulations are adopted by the State Water Board at a later date, then such regulations will be incorporated as required.

Below are certain questions the Planning & Building Dept. has been asked along with the related answers. Complete information and reports are available on the Central Coast Region website at: <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb3/>

Question: Why did the RWQCB decide to take this recent action (adoption of the Implementation Program into the *Central Coast Basin Plan*)?

Answer: On May 9, 2008, the RWQCB adopted an amendment to the Basin Plan that updated and clarified criteria for onsite systems. At this time RWQCB was also planning to approve the Implementation Program as well, but Regional Board staff decided the program needed additional editing. The Implementation Program provides the necessary steps for the RWQCB and local regulatory agencies to enter into an MOU to provide compliance with recent changes to the Central Coast Basin Plan. In May 2008 the Implementation Program was pulled from the agenda and re-written by Regional Board staff. We presented comments on the new program at the November 14, 2008 RWQCB scoping meeting.

Question: Will existing septic systems require upgrading (costing up to \$45,000.00)?

Answer: Existing systems that continue to function effectively are not under review. Failing systems must be brought into compliance with the Basin Plan consistent with the locally implemented onsite wastewater management plan. It is possible that some existing conventional systems that fail will need to be upgraded with an advanced septic system. These systems will only be required on lots that have conditions that will not permit construction of a conventional septic system. This would include lots with high groundwater, shallow bedrock, or lots that cannot meet required setbacks.

Question: Will all septic systems along the Salinas River be required to have a 600' setback?

Answer: The 600 foot setback is a requirement of AB 885 and not the *Central Coast Basin Plan* and therefore does not apply at this time.